

THE PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET-SENSITIVE

September 19, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

SUBJECT: The Situation in Jordan

State Department review completed

NSA review completed

After two days of fighting, the Jordanian army is still far from securing Amman. Although the army continues to have the upper hand, King Hussein apparently has been reluctant to apply the maximum force available to him for fear of causing numerous civilian casualties and reducing the city to a shambles. Some of his military strength is also being drawn off to cope with the stiff fedayeen resistance in the cities to the north. Hussein's problem now is that the longer the fighting drags on the greater will be the pressure from the other Arab states to accept a compromise solution.

Our Embassy in Amman comments that this is not a win-or-lose situation for Hussein. The question is what kind of compromise Hussein will settle for. He appears to view his objective as restoring his authority in urban centers while not putting himself completely at odds with the Palestinians who form a large part of his population. Put another way, he seems to be seeking a solution which will still leave him with the support of the "silent majority" of moderate Palestinians. This objective and the pressures of other Arabs may cause him to stop short of completely suppressing the guerrillas, but our Embassy last night felt that unless the pace of his movement increased today he would not be in a strong position to force compromise on his terms.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

The Military Situation

After another day of heavy fighting in Amman in which the army continued to make gradual progress in rooting out the fedayeen, the fighting slacked off again last night. The army opened up again, however, at dawn and may be pressing its attack more intensively than in the past two days. The embassy was repeatedly attacked last night by a small group of fedayeen who were finally driven off by the Beduin guard with the help of a tank. All embassy personnel are reported safe. MORI/CDF C03321118

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There are indications that the army is making some progress in the north, although it seems to be meeting fairly stiff resistance. Yesterday army troops were encircling Ramtha (see attached map), just south of the Syrian border. Ramtha is a key town, since Jordanian control there would cut off movement of fedayeen reinforcements and supplies coming in from Syria. According to

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The Hostages

A spokesman for the PFLP said yesterday that the 54 hostages from the hijacked aircraft are "in good condition". A senior PFLP official in Beirut, told our Embassy there that despite its

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previous statement, the PFLP is now prepared to negotiate the release of the hostages through the Red Cross. They insist, however, that these negotiations be held in Beirut and quickly, today if possible. The spokesman claimed that this proposal was made not from weakness but for humanitarian reasons. He said that as of yesterday afternoon a number of the hostages required medical attention -- not because they had been injured in the fighting, but because of their general health. He added that the hostages were housed in areas where there had been no fighting, but that there were no doctors available to treat them.

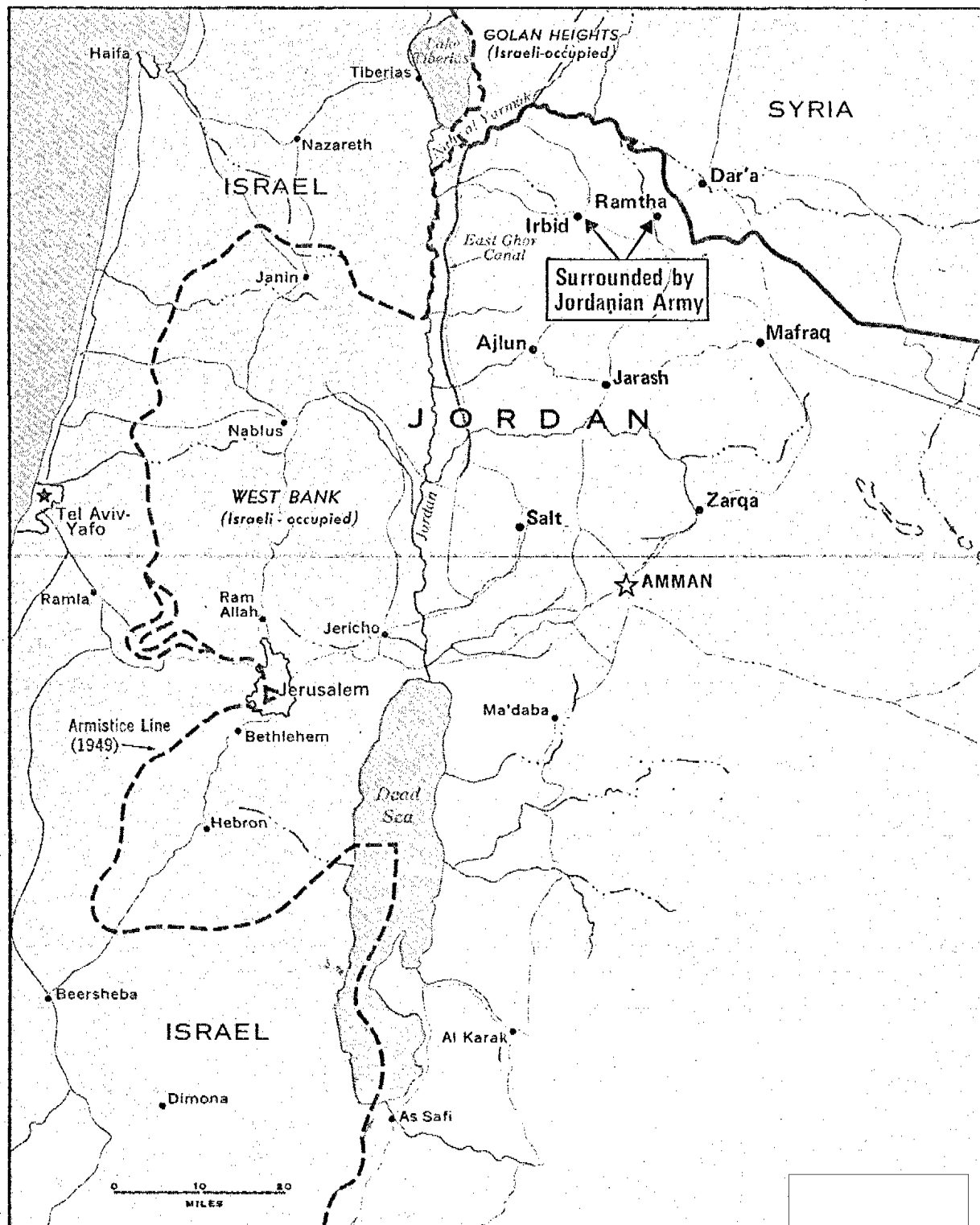
Reaction to U.S. Actions

The Soviets are apparently increasingly concerned at the possibility of U.S., British or Israeli intervention in Jordan. Soviet charge Vorontsov yesterday called "urgently" on Deputy Assistant Secretary Davies to ask that Secretary Rogers be informed of the following:

- The Soviets are concerned about the situation in Jordan which "complicates" the entire situation in the Middle East and may "adversely affect" attempts to achieve a peace settlement.
- The Soviets "hope" that the U.S. agrees that it is necessary for "all states, including those not belonging to this region," to "exercise prudence" in their steps concerning the Middle East situation. They draw "special attention" to Israel and "hope" that the U.S. will use its influence to preclude the possibility of Israel's exploiting the situation. The Soviets, for their part, have already urged the leaders of Jordan, Iraq, Syria and the UAR to take measures to put an end to the fighting in Jordan.
- The Soviet Government "as before, stands for a settlement of the Middle East crisis based on the November 1967 U.N. Security Council resolution."

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JORDAN: Current Situation



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